

25 WELL KNOWN
PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

A

Special Feature

of the

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

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PGC Photo by Cady

RINGNECK PHEASANT

Native of Asia; introduced into Pennsylvania 1915. Favorite habitat—grain-fields, meadows, bushy fence-rows, open marshes, old pastures. Nest on ground, in grasses; 6-12 olive-buff eggs; young leave nest at hatching. Food—at least 56 known species of vegetable foods and 6 groups of insects; especially fond of corn.

RUFFED GROUSE

Our State bird. Average weight about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Nests on ground, often at base of tree; 8-15 eggs, pale buff, usually unmarked; one brood per year; young leave nest when dry. Food—buds, fruits, leaves of aspen, birch, beech, maple; grapes; other fruits, nuts and berries. Population cyclic with peaks about every ten years. Maximum flight speed—about 22 m.p.h. Male famous for drumming.



PGC Photo by Batcheler

E. P. Haddon, Fish and Wildlife Service



BOBWHITE QUAIL

Popular game bird; permanent resident; favorite habitat—thickets, brushy and weedy edges of woodlands, old weed fields. Nests on ground, in high grass; 10-15 eggs, pure white; young leave nests at hatching. Food—mostly insects and weed seeds. Famous for whistled call of "bob-white." Forms coveys in winter with 10 or more birds.

MALLARD DUCK

One of most common of all Pennsylvania ducks. Found on waterways throughout State; many permanent residents; migrants start arriving March 1, leaving November 1. Nest in depression under brush or in high grass near water, lined with down; 6-15 eggs, greenish to gray-brown. Food—grains, mosquito larvae, aquatic plants. Can fly 60 m.p.h.



Maslowski & Goodpaster



PGC Photo

WILD TURKEY

Looks somewhat like domestic turkey except tips of tail feathers and upper tail coverts are chestnut color instead of white. Found throughout State in woodland areas. Nest on ground; 8-16 eggs, buffy-white to yellowish-buff, with small dots of clay-color. Food—seeds, nuts, grain, insects. Will often run, rather than fly, away from danger.

Maslowski & Goodpaster

MOURNING DOVE

Migratory game bird although many winter in Pennsylvania. Nest usually low in trees; 2 eggs, white; two or more broods. Food—grains and seeds. Famous for sad song. Speed—41 m.p.h.



CANADA GOOSE

Famous migrants, arriving mid-February to early April; leaving mid-October to mid-December; some permanent residents. Weight to 18 pounds. Adults mate for life, breed when 3 years old; 5-9 eggs, buff color; 1 annual brood. Gander defends goose and young; can be very dangerous. Food—roots, grain, insects, aquatic plants. Flies in V-shaped flocks.



PGC Photo by Cady



Mr. Burley, Fish & Wildlife Service

WOODCOCK

Migratory game bird. Found in alder thickets, swamps, other damp ground. Nest on or near ground; 3-4 brownish eggs; young leave nest when hatched, may be carried by parent. Food—mostly earthworms; other grubs, beetles, insects. Speed—13 m.p.h. Male famous for courtship flight. Flesh relished for fine flavor.

SPARROW HAWK

Common and widely distributed summer resident from March 10-Nov. 15; fairly common winter resident. Smallest of all Pa. hawks; not much larger than robin; commonly seen perching on telephone wires. Nest in tree cavity; 3-7 buff to brownish eggs, heavily spotted with reddish brown. Food—principally insects and mice. Protected in Pennsylvania.



PGC Photo by Cady



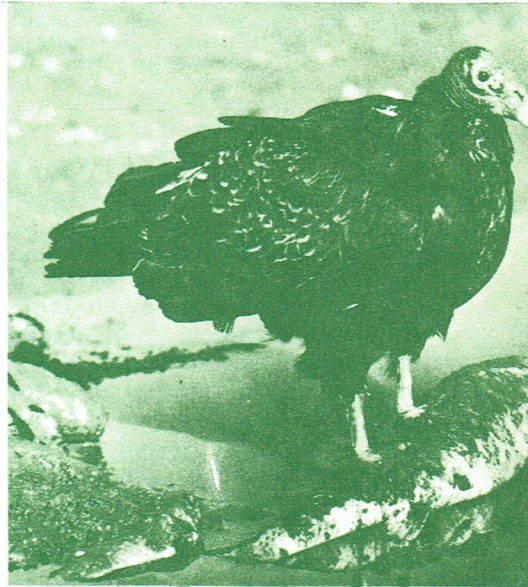
Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society

SCREECH OWL

Only small owl with ear-tufts. Common permanent resident. Two color phases—red and gray. Nest in tree cavity, often in orchard; 4-6 white eggs. Food—chiefly mice and insects. Famous for call which is not “screech” but mournful cry. Often comes into cities and towns.

TURKEY VULTURE

Common summer resident throughout State; many winter here. Largest “high-soaring” bird except for eagle; found generally in farming areas. Lays two, white eggs on ground, in hollow stump or under rocks; young in nest about two months. Food—mostly carrion, detected at great height by sight. Flight speed—to 21 m.p.h.



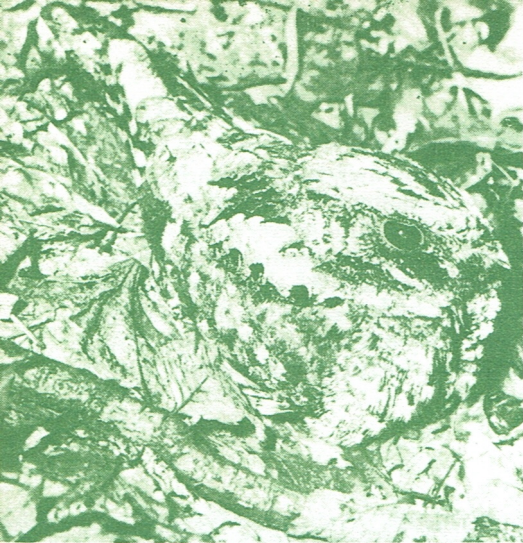
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KILLDEER

Common plover of Pennsylvania farmlands; summer resident from mid-March to mid-November. Favorite habitat old pastures, plowed fields, along streams. Nest in depression on ground; 4 buff-white eggs with chocolate spots or scrawls. Food—largely insects and earthworms. Flight speed—55 m.p.h.



Hal H. Harrison from National Audubon Society

WHIPPOORWILL

Summer resident from April 20 to September 30; found only in deep woodlands. Famous for call on summer evenings. Two white eggs laid on leaves or ground. Food—entirely insects, including moths, mosquitoes, June beetles, gnats. Never flies high in sky like nighthawk.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Our smallest bird; common summer resident from May 1 to October 1. Found in open woodlands, orchards, often in urban gardens. Nest—small, dainty structure made of plant-down, lichens, cobwebs fastened to tree branch 4 to 30 feet above ground; 2 white eggs. Food—nectar and insects. Flight speed—55 m.p.h.; wing beat 50-80 times per second.



Allan D. Cruickshank from National Audubon Society

Hal H. Harrison



DOWNY WOODPECKER

Smallest true woodpecker; permanent resident; found almost anywhere trees grow. Nest—cavity in dead stub, usually 15-30 feet from ground; entrance about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 4-6 glossy white eggs. Food—almost entirely insects; easily attracted to feeding trays, fond of suet.

PHOEBE

Common summer resident from mid-March to November. Found along borders of wooded or bushy streams, about farms, usually near stream or pond. Nest under bridge, or rock ledge, under porch roof; made of moss, mud covered, well lined; 3-6 white eggs. Food—almost entirely insects; one of most valuable birds.



Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society

MEADOWLARK

Common summer resident from mid-March to November; some winter residents. Found in fields and meadows. Nest in open fields; built of grasses, usually with roof; 3-6 white eggs, spotted with reddish brown. Food—almost entirely insects, most of which injurious to crops; fall food—weed seeds.



George H. Harrison

BARN SWALLOW

Common summer resident from mid-April to late August or early September. Found in open country, farmlands; usually near water. Nest a cup of mud, lined with feathers and a few grasses; built upon rafter on inside of barn or other building; eggs: 3-7, white, spotted with brown. Food—entirely insects. Flight speed—to 46 m.p.h. Only swallow with deeply forked tail.

Roger Tory Peterson from
National Audubon Society



CROW

Common year round resident; probably best known Pennsylvania bird except for robin. Found everywhere. Nest—bulky structure of twigs, moss, leaves; lined with hair, grape-vine bark, moss; placed 20-60 feet from ground in trees; eggs: 3-6 light bluish green, heavily spotted with brown and gray. Food—enormous quantities insects, carrion, weed seeds, birds' eggs, grain, mice, corn.



PGC Photo by Cady



Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society

BLUEJAY

Permanent resident; found in forests, about farms, in villages and parks. Nest—bulky mass of twigs, roots, weed-stalks; placed 10-30 feet from ground, often in conifer; eggs: 3-6 pale gray green, heavily spotted with brown and gray. Food—insects, spiders, snails, fish, frogs, birds and their eggs, nuts and acorns. Flight speed—20 m.p.h.

Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society

HOUSE WREN

One of most popular Pennsylvania birds; common summer resident from mid-April to late September. Nest—in man-made bird houses but also in natural cavities; bulky mass of twigs, lined with feathers; eggs: 5-9 pinkish white, finely spotted and wreathed with reddish brown; 1-2 broods per year. Food—largely insects.





Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society

ROBIN

Probably most popular Pennsylvania bird; found everywhere; some year round residents, others migrate March-November. Nest—neat cup of grasses, weed stalks, string, etc., with inner lining of mud; placed in trees, under a roof. Eggs—3-5, blue; incubation 11-14 days; 2-3 annual broods. Food—largely earthworms; also insects, fruits and berries.

BLUEBIRD

The “harbinger of spring”; common summer resident from early March to November; casual in winter. Found chiefly in cultivated areas. Nest—of grasses, in tree cavity or birdhouse, 5-20 feet from ground. Eggs—4-6, light blue; incubation for 12 days by both parents; 2-3 annual broods. Food—mostly insects, some weed seeds and wild fruit. Starlings drive bluebirds from nesting sites.

Allan D. Cruickshank from
National Audubon Society



Hal H. Harrison



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Common summer resident from mid-March to early November; found in marshes, low, wet meadows; around streams and lakes. Nest—neatly woven basket of dry grasses, suspended between cattail stalks a few feet above water or ground. Eggs—3-6, pale blue, spotted and scrawled with black; incubation 10-14 days; 1-2 annual broods. Food—largely insects, grains.



Maslowski & Goodpaster

CARDINAL

Permanent resident; popular visitor to winter feeding stations. Nest—neat, thin cup of wood-stalks and grasses, lined with fine grasses or hair. Eggs—3-4, white, spotted and speckled with lilac and gray; incubation 12 days. Food—seeds, wild fruit, grains, insects.

WANT TO HELP GAME AND SONGBIRDS?

25 *Things You Can Do*

1. Build and erect bird houses.
2. Build and erect feeding trays or other devices to feed songbirds in winter.
3. Build and erect bird baths in summer.
4. Build corn-crib type wild turkey feeders, place them along spring-runs in the forest, and keep them filled with ear corn in the winter and early spring.
5. Build a wood duck nesting box and place it in suitable location.
6. Raise pheasants in the Commission's Day-old Pheasant Chick program. See your local Game Protector for details.
7. Plant a multi-flora rose hedgerow to provide protective and nesting cover for game birds.
8. Plant aquatic plants like duckweed, smartweed, wild rice, sago pondweed, etc. for wild waterfowl.
9. Learn to identify bird nests by making a collection of them in the fall.
10. Control stray cats and other predators.
11. Collect discarded Christmas trees and make them into shelters for game and song birds in winter.
12. Make and erect a suet feeder in winter.
13. Make a check-list of birds seen about your home or farm.
14. Make a bird calendar. Keep a record of the dates when migratory birds arrive in your yard or farm in the spring and leave in the fall.
15. Prevent destruction of eggs during the nesting season. Build cat-guards on nest trees; locate and mark pheasant and quail nests and encourage farmers to mow around them.
16. Encourage farmers to leave a few rows of corn standing in winter for feeding game and songbirds.
17. Collect and place into containers nesting materials for birds such as yarn, pieces of string, scraps of cloth, etc.
18. Learn to identify beneficial, protected hawks in Pennsylvania and encourage others not to shoot them.
19. Make and distribute posters urging people to conserve wild birds.
20. Give a short talk on bird conservation before your school class or other civic group.
21. Make a bird conservation exhibit and display it in a store window, school or public library, or other public place, especially during National Wildlife Week in March and on Bird and Arbor Day, April 9th each year.
22. Prevent forest fires and field fires. Organize fire fighting crews to help control these destroyers of bird nests and eggs.
23. Be sure to return any band found on a dead bird. Send it to the Game Commission or to the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, along with information on when and where you found the bird.
24. Encourage drivers of vehicles in which you ride to give wild birds a "brake" on the highways. Ask them to sound the horn if they see pheasants or other birds walking across the highway.
25. Plant shrubs and other trees, grasses, and vines that will produce more food and cover for wild birds.

How To Attract Birds,

PEOPLE everywhere are learning more to appreciate birds and are trying to attract them to their homes and farms. Although there are sound economic advantages in having many birds living on your land, the greatest reward is probably your enjoyment of our feathered friends. The activity, beauty, and songs of birds usually supply all the incentive needed to build a birdhouse, construct a feeding station, plant food and cover shrubs and trees, or make any other effort to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's native birdlife. This leaflet, an enlarged version of a special feature which originally appeared in the April, 1954 "Silver Anniversary" Issue of the PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS, is designed to give you practical, correct information on what you can do to attract birds and how such worthwhile outdoor activities can be most successful.

Homes for Birds

The first thing to consider before you build or buy a birdhouse is what kinds of birds are found in your neighborhood. Too often people build a house without knowing what birds are already present to use it; the house remains vacant and the builder is disappointed. If you have never seen a bluebird in your vicinity, for example, chances are bluebird houses,

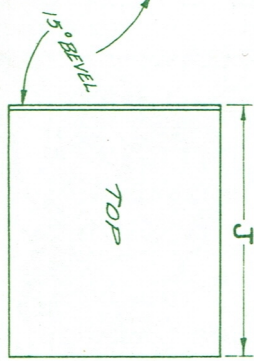
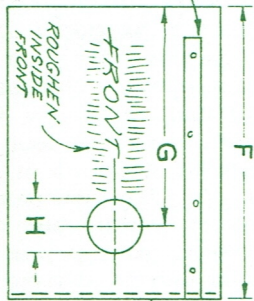
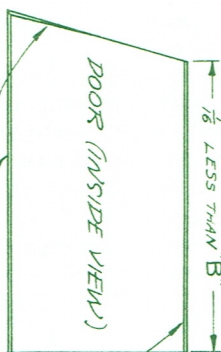
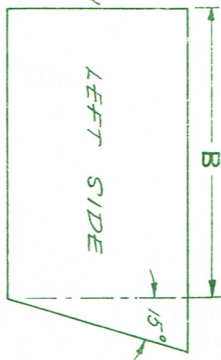
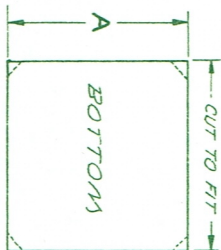
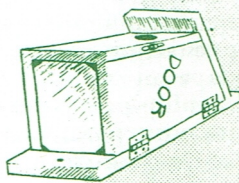
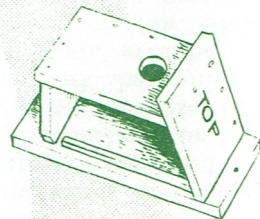
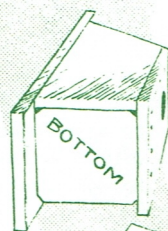
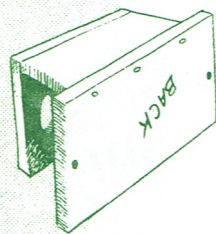
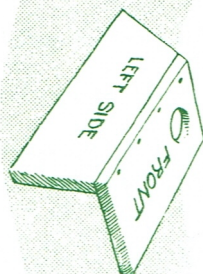
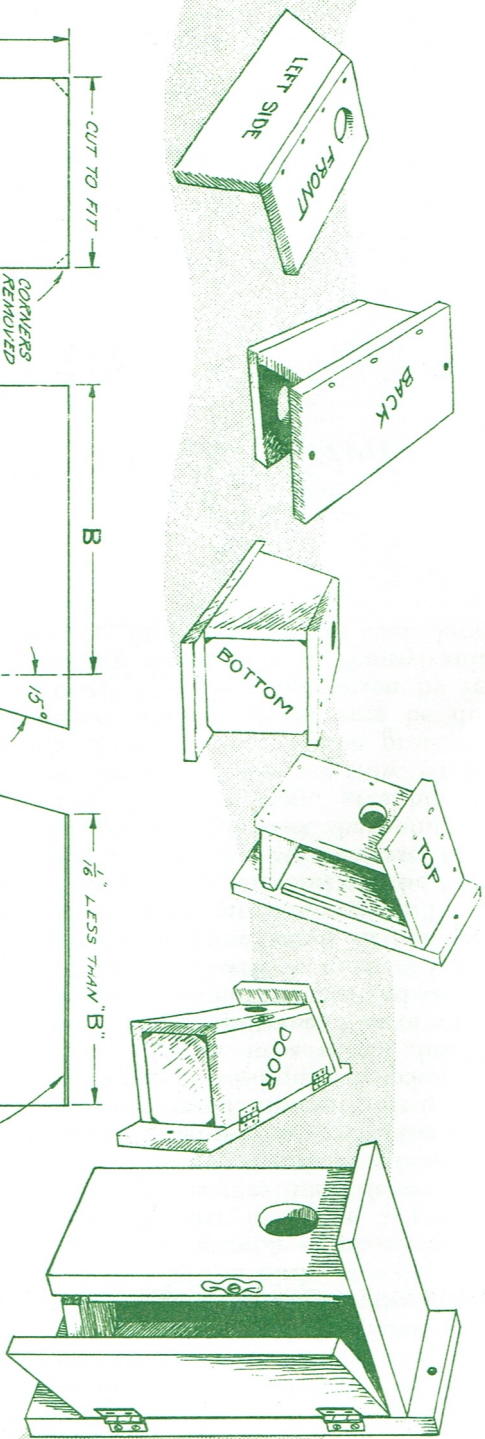


by themselves, will not attract the species to your yard.

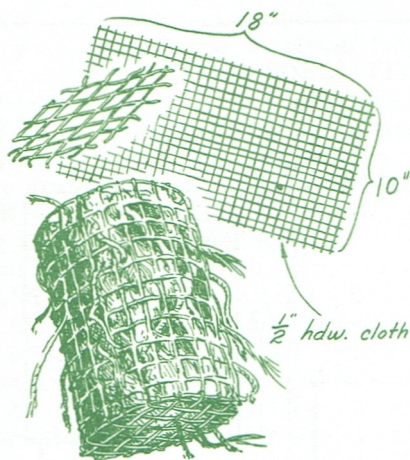
Next, study the size and type of house needed for the particular birds you want to nest on your property. In other words, build the house to please the bird; not necessarily the builder.

Follow the specifications which are given in this leaflet for size and diameter of entrance hole. Except in the case of purple martins, build a one-family box only! Most songbirds have a highly developed territory habit and will not permit another bird family under the same roof. Put up only a few bird houses in a limited area, depending on the cover and food available. Except for members of the swallow family, there should not be more than four or five nesting-boxes to the acre.

HOUSE WREN boxes should be hung or placed 5-10 feet above the



EDGES BEVELED TO PREVENT BINDING-



NESTING-MATERIAL RACK

After the birds have left the house, the old nest should be removed and the box cleaned. It is recommended that the inside of the boxes be painted with 5% DDT solution each year to eliminate parasites.

Those who make birdhouses carefully will want them to last as long as possible. Wood-treating materials are now available which contain a water repellent, a fungicide and a penetrating oil. These are extremely effective in increasing the life of the

house by reducing decay and weathering. This treatment is far more effective than paint in preserving the wood. However, paint is a help in case other preservatives are not available. Apparently, dark green, dark gray, or dark brown are the colors preferred by the birds.

It is not desirable to place nesting material either in or on a nesting box, since it may indicate to prospective tenants that some other bird has prior rights. Birds will often use nesting material, however, if it is conveniently placed in the crotch of a nearby tree or in a special holder made for this purpose. Bits of yarn, wool, or cotton, horsehair, and sphagnum moss all will be used by birds.

Finally, a few words of caution. All songbirds are protected in Pennsylvania except the bluejay, the English sparrow, the European starling, the kingfisher, goshawk, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, great-horned owl, snowy owl, and the crow. Under no circumstances may the protected species, their nests or eggs be disturbed. Practice conservation by reporting illegal acts to Pennsylvania Game Protectors or to your local police.

Feeding Small Wild Birds In Winter

NEARLY everyone experiences a feeling of sympathy for wild birds in midwinter when temperatures are low and the ground is covered with snow. It's only natural that a great many persons want to comfort and care for wild birds. Many kindhearted, thoughtful people, however, would be unpleasantly surprised if they were told that their generosity,

rather than having helped the birds survive the winter, had been responsible, in some cases, in causing their death. This does not mean that winter feeding should be discontinued, but it does mean such artificial feeding should follow certain biological rules.

Five common dangers may accompany winter feeding activities: 1. If

a large number of small birds are attracted to a feeding station or if the birds must feed some distance from protective cover, certain predaceous species may take a considerable toll. Birds which may be relatively secure in their natural habitat can become vulnerable to attack when drawn to food placed in the open.

2. Food supplied to small birds should be of the proper kind. Birds are unable to survive cold weather and periods of food scarcity without an adequate supply of vitamin A. Wheat, buckwheat, oats, rye, barley, white corn, and yellow soybeans contain very little vitamin A and should not be used for winter feeding. Yellow corn is probably the best single item for supplying this vitamin. This grain can be fed whole, cracked, or as corn meal. Other items containing

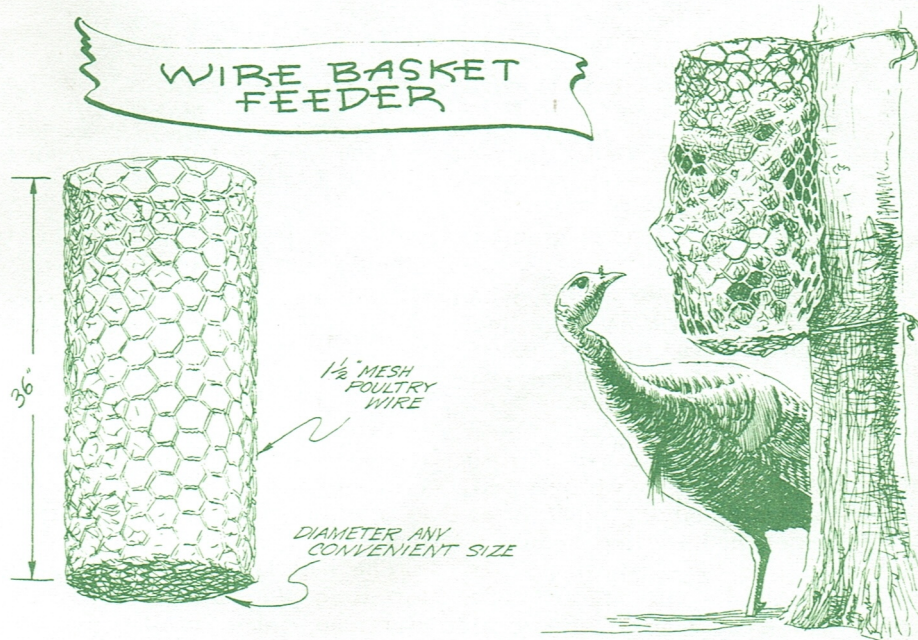
vitamin A are green, leafy vegetables, chopped carrots, and black Wilson soybeans.

3. The possibility of disease transmission among birds using a common feeding site is an ever-present danger. Proper kinds of feeding traps or hoppers reduce this hazard but do not eliminate it.

4. Feeding birds may bring into restricted areas more birds than the natural food sources will support. If for any reason the artificial feeding is interrupted, many of these birds may die of starvation.

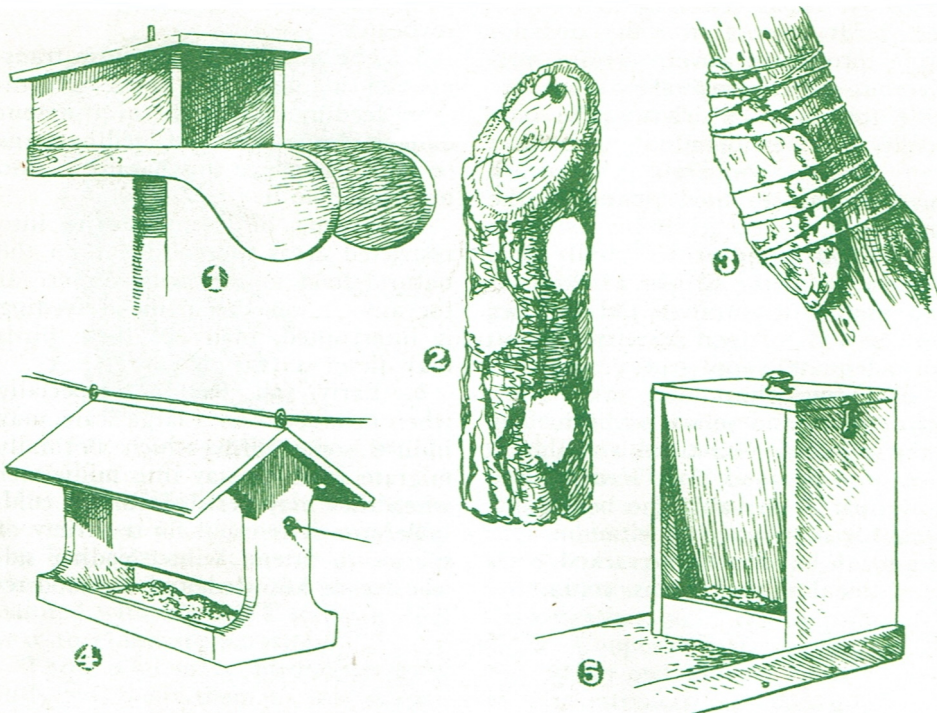
5. Early fall feeding, especially when conducted on a large scale, may induce some birds which normally migrate south to stay into midwinter when they may perish from the cold.

Because it is usual for a variety of species to attend winter-feeding stations, some knowledge of the food re-



FASTEN TO TREE WITH BOTTOM
20" ABOVE THE GROUND.

NED SMITH



1. Weather-vane type bird feeder—keeps feeding platform sheltered from the wind, rain or snow. 2. A 15" log, about 4" in diameter, makes excellent feeder. Drill $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter holes and fill with suet, peanut butter. 3. Suet or other solid feed can be tied directly to tree trunks. 4. Trolley type feeder. 5. Automatic refill feature makes this bird feeder a good choice.

quirements of each general group is necessary.

Woodpeckers, titmice, chickadees, and nuthatches feed largely upon animal matter in the form of insects. For these birds, suet, chopped peanuts, other nutmeats, sunflower seeds, broken dog biscuits, and cooked meat are preferable. Bluejays will also eat these items as well as various seeds and fruits provided for other birds.

For seed-eating birds like the juncos, cardinals, sparrows, starlings and others, the list includes cracked corn, sunflower seeds, screenings, small seed mixtures, and chopped raisins, apples, or carrots.

A few precautions should be taken when supplying food for birds. Some items high in vitamin A should al-

ways be available. Metal feeders should never be used because the wet tongue of a bird may stick fast to the metal on cold days. Feeders should be made so as to keep the food dry and clean. Moldy suet or grain should be discarded immediately and residues cleaned up regularly. Bread crumbs are of little value when fed alone; use them only as a supplement to more nutritious foods.

The best safeguard against predators is to place the feeders in dense evergreen trees, brush piles, vine tangles, or thick barberry or rose bushes. Tree feeders should be protected from cats by sheet metal or wire mesh guards placed about four feet above the ground.